

A

# DISCOURSE

ON THE DEATH OF THE

REV. CHARLES T. TORREY.

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# S E R M O N .

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"And it was so, that all who saw it, said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt, unto this day : consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds."

JUDGES, 19 : 30.

THE words of astonishment and horror contained in the text, were occasioned by an outrage of an unusually aggravated character, which had been perpetrated at Gibeah—the details of which are given in this nineteenth chapter of the book of Judges. It appears that a Levite, whose residence was "on the side of Mount Ephraim," took to him a concubine (by which we are to understand, not a harlot, or a kept mistress, but a secondary wife,) from Bethlehem-judah. This conduct which would be viewed as criminal at the present day, was in that age of moral darkness, allowed and reputable. To this concubine, or secondary wife, (for in verse third he is expressly called "her husband,") the Levite was tenderly attached, as will be obvious from the fact, that when she proved unfaithful, deserted his home for her father's house, where she abode four months, instead of casting her off, he followed and entreated her to return. He was successful in his undertaking, and after remaining with his father-in-law for five days, he turned his face homewards, with his wife and servant. Night overtook them as they drew near to Jerusalem, and the servant urged his master to tarry there till morning: but the Levite was unwilling to lodge in a city belonging to the heathen, (for Jerusalem had not yet been subdued by the Israelites, but was in the hands of Jebusites,) and accordingly passed on to Gibeah, which was a city of the tribe of Benjamin. Sitting down in the street, according to oriental custom, they waited, till an old man, formerly a resident in Mount Ephraim, invited them to his house. During the evening "certain sons of Belial," beat at the door, demanding that the stranger should be delivered into their hands, intending to commit sodomy. When they could be pacified in no other way, the Levite took his concubine and placed her at their disposal. The result may easily be

imagined—she was abused all the night, and in the morning had but just strength to drag herself to the door of the house, where she expired. When the Levite opened the door in the morning and found his concubine dead, he laid the body upon an ass, returned to his home, and divided it into twelve pieces which he sent to the various tribes of Israel, accompanied no doubt with a statement of the facts. By this strange and to us revolting procedure, he in the most solemn and emphatic manner appealed to the tribes for justice, and placed them under a solemn anathema; as though he had said, “If ye refuse to avenge the death of this woman, if ye allow the perpetrators of such a crime to escape unpunished, may your bodies in like manner be hewn in pieces.” The text describes the effect produced upon the mind of the nation. Every man was confounded and stood aghast at the awful sight, while by universal acknowledgement the crime was branded as the most atrocious outrage which had been committed since Israel had a national existence. “And it was so, that all that saw it, said, There was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.”

My hearers, there is a sad and fearful significance in these words, as applicable to the circumstances which have convened this assembly. A crime hitherto unparalleled in the history of our country has just been committed—a daring outrage on the rights of man and a bold defiance of the wrath of God. The body of the murdered Torrey.—“the herald corpse,” as it has been termed in allusion to the events connected with the text, has made its appeal to the hearts of all who fear God in this land. The cruel hatred of his enemies, has accomplished its design, their murderous intentions are executed, the breath

their victim has departed, and they are left in savage exultation to gloat over the deed of darkness. Hell gave a shout of triumph as the last pulse beat, while Heaven gazed astonished at an act of infamy, which, I hesitate not to say, in view of the age and country in which it was committed, exceeded in atrocity the outrage at Gibeah.

If the latter demanded the immediate action of ancient Israel, if in fact it roused the nation and called them forth for vengeance, so that we are told, “all the children of Israel went out and the congregation was gathered together as one man.” shall the death of Torrey pass unnoticed? Shall it fail to quicken our sluggish blood, to nerve our trembling and dastard arm, to inspire us with a determination like him to conquer or die in our assaults upon slavery? Is there a man present whose inmost soul did not leap within him, when the summons went forth, for the friends of the martyred Torrey to meet at

this time, that we might honor his memory and catch his falling mantle? I do my hearers injustice to ask such a question. I know the spirit ye are of—I know the solemn purpose that has brought you hither, and feel confident that I may rely upon your attention, while in adverting to the martyrdom of Torrey, I shall

REVIEW THE FACTS OF THE CASE,

NOTICE THE CHARACTER OF THE CRIME COMMITTED, AND

CONSIDER THE EFFECT WHICH SUCH AN ATROCIOUS ACT SHOULD HAVE UPON THE FRIENDS OF HUMANITY IN OUR COUNTRY.

I. *Let us review the facts connected with the death of Torrey.* In order to a just appreciation of the outrage which the people of Maryland, in the persons of their rulers, have inflicted on our murdered brother, it will be necessary to pass in review the principal events of his life. Let not my object, however, be misunderstood. It is not my intention to eulogize our departed brother as possessed of every conceivable virtue, and as free from every moral blemish, and thus by your aid to perform a work of needless canonization. I am as well aware of his enemies can be, that in some, perhaps I should say, in many respects, his life might be the subject of criticism. He had his public, social and his private failings, none of which do I purpose to deny or defend. While making this admission, however, I contend that his virtues far, far outnumbered his faults, and that in murdering him, Maryland has murdered a man of principle, who loved his neighbor and feared his God.

CHARLES TURNER TORREY, was born in Scituate, in the State of Massachusetts, November 21st, 1813. Before he had completed his fourth year, he was left an orphan, by the death of both his parents. His early education was received at Exeter Academy, (N. H.) from which he entered Yale College. After completing his collegiate course, he prosecuted his theological studies at Andover Theological Seminary, and was shortly after, March 22d, 1837, settled over a church in Providence, R. I., at the age of twenty-three years. About this time, he married the daughter of the Rev. Dr. Ide, and the grand-daughter of Rev. Dr. Emmons. He remained but six months in Providence, becoming deeply interested in the anti-slavery cause, and laboring with much zeal and ability in its promotion. While thus occupied, he received and accepted a call to be pastor of a church in Salem, Massachusetts, in which office he remained a year and a half, leaving in August 1839. He was then engaged for several years in writing and lecturing upon the subject of slavery, having been connected in an editorial capacity with the Massachusetts Abolitionist and the Albany Patriot. In 1842, a convention of slaveholders was

held at Annapolis, for the purpose of adopting measures to secure the system against the attacks of abolitionists. Mr. Torrey was present to report the proceedings, rightly judging that it would be expedient to lay the debates which might arise, before the community. While engaged in this peaceful occupation, he was seized and thrown into prison, where he was kept for a week, until the slaveholders were compelled to release their victim, on finding that by no possible construction of the statutes, could his conduct be tortured into crime. On the twenty-fifth of June, 1844, Mr. Torrey was arrested in Baltimore, on the charge of aiding the slaves of one Heckrotte, to escape. His trial came on in the latter part of November and the first of December—he was found guilty and sentenced to six years imprisonment in the Maryland State Prison, to which he was removed December 30th, 1844. His health continued to be good, till last autumn, when consumptive symptoms manifested themselves, and though he received every medical attention of which his situation in a prison admitted, he became weaker and weaker, until it was evident that, if not liberated, he must soon die. At this juncture, a strong effort was made by the friends of Torrey to procure his release. About \$2000 was raised, to pay Heckrotte the value of the slaves who had escaped, and for other necessary expenses, on condition that Torrey should be safely delivered in Philadelphia, free from all further liability. A petition, praying for his pardon, was forwarded to Governor Pratt, of Maryland, signed by a number of the most influential citizens of Massachusetts of all political parties; a similar one was presented, signed by many distinguished citizens of Maryland, themselves slaveholders; Mrs. Torrey, appealed in behalf of her husband to Executive clemency; the consent of the court who tried him was obtained for his release, the physician attached to the prison gave a certificate, that unless Torrey was removed, he would certainly die—every influence was brought to bear that could be, but all in vain! The Governor was inexorable. He could feel no compassion for a dying minister of the gospel, imprisoned for no crime—he could turn a deaf ear to a pleading wife asking that her husband and the father of her children, might at least be permitted to expire in the midst of his family—he could refuse so small a boon, even after he was certain that the prisoner would die, and yet with a mournful inconsistency, he pardoned at the earnest entreaty of the criminal's wife, a wretch who had been convicted of aggravated forgery.\*

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\* When this discourse was preached, I stated on the authority of a newspaper, that the criminal pardoned had been convicted of piracy for engaging in the slave trade, but have since learned that the crime was as stated above.

Thus was the ambassador of Christ left to breathe his last within the cold walls of a prison, and far from those most dear to him on earth. But he was not forgotten by those who had known him in brighter days. While on his dying bed he was visited by several ministers of the gospel, and by many private Christians. With a truly Christian spirit, the church at Worcester, of which Mr. Torrey was a member, deputed their pastor, the Rev. Mr. Smalley, to comfort their brother in his hour of trial by the assurance that he shared their warmest sympathies, and was remembered in their most fervent prayers. But, better than all, he enjoyed the presence of the Saviour, and the testimony of a good conscience. Those who had the privilege of conversing with him, testify that his soul was perfectly prepared to die, and even looked forward to death with rejoicing.

Says the Rev. Mr. Smalley: "He seemed to be in a very desirable frame of mind, and spoke of the present and future with entire resignation of spirit. At his request I administered the sacrament of the Lord's supper to him. It was, indeed, a solemn and impressive scene. He appeared to be lost in devout and grateful contemplation of the Redeemer; and though unable to say much, he obviously felt that the promises of the blessed Saviour were full of hope and consolation. The emotions of that hour cannot easily be forgotten." The Rev. Dr. Welch, of Albany, declares that he has rarely, if ever, seen a more triumphant death-bed. There was one expression of our brother, which, to my mind, is peculiarly touching. We are told, that "he spoke of the kindness of Jesus in making 'sick and in prison' the climax of his specifications when he noticed the positions in which his disciples might administer to his wants. He may have thought of *me*," said this dying martyr of liberty." Thus peaceful and resigned, Mr. Torrey lingered till three o'clock in the afternoon of the ninth of May, when in the expressive language of Scripture, he "fell asleep," and passed to that land, "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest, where the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master."

Mr. Torrey was a man of more than ordinary talent. The native energy of his mind found ready expression by his voice and pen. A striking proof of the latter is the fact, that during the ten days which intervened between his trial and sentence, he wrote a volume of some two hundred pages, which has already passed through several editions, and is said to be of great interest. During the winter of 1842, he was employed by one of the Boston daily papers, as a letter writer at Washington. Since his death the editors have

said "his letters were much sought after and more generally copied than the ordinary correspondence of the papers. There was a raciness, a piquancy and an independence in the spirit of his remarks, which rendered them quite popular."

The character of Mr. Torrey presents two features very prominently—Independence and Fearlessness. It may indeed be said, that at times these qualities were not sufficiently regulated by a sound discretion, and I will not deny, that according to my own judgment, he did things inconsistent with the claims which his family and his sacred calling as a minister of the gospel, had upon him. But this is not the time and place to review his errors, and I envy not the heart of the man who, at such a juncture as the present, when so costly a victim as an ambassador of Jesus Christ has been sacrificed to the American Moloch, can employ himself in publishing the faults of the dead, can forget the enormity of the outrage because there were blemishes in the character of him on whom it was perpetrated. Mr. Torrey was a man of deep sympathy and expanded benevolence, and when once his convictions of duty were formed, no power on earth could turn him from his purpose. For the slave, he felt as few others feel. The whole energy of his being was thrown into the anti-slavery cause and through reproach, opposition and persecution, he held on his steadfast way to the last. Others may have been more cautious—others may have possessed a better judgment, but none labored with a more self-sacrificing spirit to procure liberty for the captive. He has been charged with rashness and imprudence, and he probably was wont to rely too exclusively upon his own judgment: and yet it may be difficult for us to pronounce an impartial verdict in his case. It was eloquently and truthfully remarked, at the great meeting, held at Faneuil Hall, on the evening of the day he was buried, "If the world had never witnessed any imprudence, it had never seen any change. Prudent men rarely hazard anything in unpopular enterprises. Prudent men rarely sow the seed whose crop is reaped by posterity." I doubt not the Priest and the Levite, exclaimed with upraised hands, against the imprudence of the Good Samaritan, because he ventured to assist the wounded man, not knowing but the robbers might attack, and strip, and wound himself. Doubtless, Peter, John, Paul, Luther, and other distinguished men whose praises are now on all lips, were denounced in their own day as rash and imprudent. The lapse of a few generations ordinarily transforms such men into bold and conscientious reformers. The sons build the sepulchres of the very men their fathers slew, and it is not an impossible or even an improbable supposition, that in future years, Torrey

may have a monument in Baltimore itself. There may be a question as to the expediency of the course which he pursued, yet must we remember that he probably has done more, in that very way for the liberation of the slave, than all the well-inclined, but do-nothing ministers in the country. While in prison, awaiting his trial, he wrote to Henry B. Stanton, of Boston, in these words: "If I am a guilty man, I am a very guilty one; for I have aided nearly *four hundred* slaves to escape to freedom, the greater part of whom would probably, but for my exertions, have died in slavery." That was the man whose efforts are alleged to have retarded the cause of freedom. When all the ministers who declare that they are as much opposed to slavery as anybody, but unfortunately can never find anything to do except to denounce the abolitionists, will prove that by their combined efforts, they have accomplished as much as our lamented brother Torrey, it will be time for them to cast the first stone at his memory. With whatever of human imperfection clung to him, Charles Turner Torrey was a man of lion-heart, who acted for God and truth. The strength of his principle will be appreciated, when it is known, that he might have escaped conviction, had he betrayed the individual who induced the slaves of Heckrotte to escape, and that even when imprisoned, he might have secured a pardon, by making such a revelation and by acknowledging that he had done wrong. But his reply was expressed in a letter to a friend—

"How can I consent to a doctrine, which my heart, my conscience, and my judgment, based on careful examination, when no possible motive of self-interest could bias me, led me to reject as opposed to the Bible and right reason? I may be erroneous in my view, for I am a fallible man; but this is no place, nor am I in a condition now, to review my settled opinions respecting the relations of Christianity to those civil laws which are contrary to natural justice and the law of God. It is better to die in prison with the peace of God in our breasts, than to live in freedom with a polluted conscience." These were the last words of Charles Turner Torrey, written one week before he died.

It is evident that God was with him in his last moments, and that after having endured with a forgiving spirit, a cruel imprisonment of nearly two years, he died praying for his enemies, sinking to rest "calmly and sweetly as a child."

"Oh! for that hidden strength which can  
Nerve unto death the inner man!  
Oh! for thy spirit, tried and true,  
And constant in the hour of trial,



Prepared to suffer, or to do,  
 In meekness, and in self-denial.  
 Oh! for that spirit meek and mild,  
 Derided, spurned, yet uncomplaining—  
 By man deserted and reviled,  
 Yet faithful to its trust remaining.  
 Still prompt and resolute to save  
 From scourge and chain the hunted slave!  
 Unwavering in the Truth's defence,  
 Even when the fires of hate are burning,  
 Th' unquailing eye of innocence,  
 Alone upon th' oppressor turning!  
 O loved of thousands! to thy grave,  
 Sorrowing of heart, thy brethren bore thee!  
 The poor man and the rescued slave  
 Wept as the broken earth closed o'er thee!"

II. *I proceed to notice the character of the crime that has been committed.* When the outrage at Gibeah was announced to the Israelites, they had no difficulty in defining its rank on the catalogue of abominations. With one consent it was denounced as the most flagrant violation of the divine law which had occurred since the nationality of Israel was established. We are called upon, at the present time, to judge of the deed which has been done in our own land, to decide upon its enormity, as compared with our other evil acts as a nation. I am aware that the catalogue of our crimes is dark and extended, that considering its youth, this nation is precocious in iniquity—still the conviction has been forced upon my mind, that the language of the text with a slight modification is applicable to the present case. "There has been no such deed done nor seen from the day that this country became independent, to this day."

To produce a similar conviction upon the minds of my hearers, it will be necessary to advert to several particulars by which the nature and aggravation of the crime will be made manifest.

1. It was the murder of a minister of Jesus Christ. I am aware that the correctness of this position has been called in question, and that intelligent men have boldly asserted that in no proper or even technical sense could the charge of murder be sustained. It is contended that there was no murderous intention connected with Torrey's death, that it was an accidental, undesigned consequence of his imprisonment. I shall admit that, at the time of his sentence, when he was in apparent health and none could foresee the effect which imprisonment would have, there may have been no intention to bring him to his grave. But the circumstances which attended his last days are sufficient to prove that a feeling of intense hatred—itsself incipient

murder—was cherished towards the prisoner, accompanied with the deliberate purpose that he should die. On no other ground can I explain the facts of the case. Application was made to Heckrotte from whom the slaves escaped, to unite in consenting to the pardon of Torrey, with the offer of \$1500 in return for his lost slave-property. He was told that for Torrey to remain longer in prison was certain death—that he had an estimable wife and loving children who longed for a husband and father, if it were but to receive his last prayer and blessing—that he would gain nothing by insisting on the execution of the legal penalty—while by consenting to his release, his pecuniary loss would be made good. The reply was such as might be expected from a blood-thirsty demon. With an oath he declared that, as for him, Torrey might die, he would consent to nothing with a view to his liberation. Will my hearers tell me, what other spirit this was, than that of a murderer? Consider now the agency of Governor Pratt in the death of our brother. To him, even stronger appeals were made than to Heckrotte. So strong an expression of opinion from unprejudiced men of the highest standing in political life was sent in—so moving an appeal was made by the prisoner's wife—so unqualified were the assertions of the physician, that there was no alternative but release or death, that it was confidently believed a pardon would be granted. What other construction can be placed on the conduct of the Governor than this, that he was willing to have Torrey die, in order to inspire the friends of the slave with fear—that as the exponent of slaveholding feeling, he was determined that one victim should suffer even unto death, rather than have slave law relaxed. This conclusion is strengthened by two facts : the pardon extended to the convicted forger, and the declaration of the Governor that if Torrey had been convicted of any other offence, such as robbery, arson, rape and the like, he would be pardoned—but it would not answer to abate severity on this point. It is plain that the slaveholders of Maryland were bent on revenge, and that in deference to their murderous designs, Torrey was kept in prison to die. I know not what others may say, but according to the principles both of human and divine law, such a crime ought to be deemed and called, murder. If it was not, much less was murder committed by the inhabitants of Gibeah. And who was thus iniquitously put to death? A Christian and a minister. I claim no greater legal protection for a minister than for any other man, but I doubt not that God who anciently said, "Touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm," views with special displeasure such an outrage on one of his ambassadors. We see that slavery knows no distinction of persons, acknowledges nothing sacred, but lays

its impious hand on the very men who minister at the altar of God, and at the very time when, in the persons of his disciples, they are affording relief to the Saviour himself.

2. This penalty was inflicted for that which was rather a virtue than a crime. Torrey was not imprisoned for anything infamous, for anything in itself blame-worthy. Had he been left to die in prison, for an act which the divine law brands as a crime, I should not stand here this evening to utter a word of praise in his behalf, or to speak a syllable of condemnation against the course of his enemies. But so far am I from believing that such a course as he pursued is in itself criminal, that I fearlessly assert that it is sustained by the promptings of universal manhood and by the teachings of the golden rule. For a man to assist a slave, peaceably to gain his liberty, is not only not wrong, but actually binding wherever it can be done without periling other and greater interests. The question is not, whether the course Torrey pursued is, in our judgment, the most expedient for the abolition of slavery; not whether it was a rash exposure of his own person; not whether it was forbidden by the pirate laws of Maryland; but, is it necessarily criminal? When the plundered and outraged slave appeals to us for aid in making his escape from bondage, is it wrong to feel compassion for his woe—is it wrong by word and act to bid him God speed to Canada? I feel that it is almost insulting the intelligence and humanity of an audience in New England, to debate such a question. If slaveholding is but the perpetuation of the piratical act which reduced the African to slavery, who is the man that will denounce the act of restoring rights long withheld? I take the position that slave law is a virtual repeal of the decalogue, and hence not binding on any man. The fact that it forbids, under heavy penalties, assisting a slave to escape, ought to have no binding power on the conscience, and were I in a slave State, the only obedience it would receive from me, would be on the ground of expediency and not of conscience—I should feel free to violate it whenever I safely could. We would all adopt the same sentiment, were we in bondage, or were our near relatives reduced to chattels. What were the circumstances in which Mr. Torrey acted? On a certain night he expected a party of fugitives from Southern oppression. He went with a carriage to the spot where they were to be. He waited for some time, but they came not, and he was about to leave when the slaves of Heckrotte, perfect strangers to him, unexpectedly appeared and urged him to convey them to a place of safety. Torrey was not the man to resist such an appeal. He thought, what should I expect and ask, were I in the situation of these poor fugitives? and he acted on the principle of the

golden rule, when he bade them enter the carriage, and at the hazard of his own liberty, and, as the result proved, at the risk and forfeit of his own life, secured their freedom. For this he was seized and thrown into prison; for this he was ranked with felons of the vilest character; for this he was sentenced to six years imprisonment in the penitentiary, and was left to linger and die within its walls, far from his wife and little ones. What was the sum of his offence? That he imitated the patriarch Job, who said, "I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth;" that he complied with the golden rule; that he had compassion on the Saviour in the person of his disciples; that he did to the poor slave, precisely what the Christians of Damascus did to Paul, from whose pen we have this account—"In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me, and through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall and escaped his hands;" that he was not ashamed to follow the example of the angel who opened the prison doors and gave liberty to the apostle Peter. I further believe that Torrey did no criminal act, because the wise and good have applauded similar conduct in all ages—provided those rescued were possessed of a *white skin*! Thus do we admire the conduct of Lafayette and of Kosciusko in assisting our fathers to throw off the yoke of British oppression; thus do we applaud those who aided Lafayette to escape from the prison at Olmutz; thus do we honor those who have delivered the white slaves held by the Algerines. The slave on a Southern plantation has a right to liberty as inalienable as that of Washington or Lafayette, and there may be the more honor and heroism, because the less applause, in securing the freedom of the former, than that of the latter. In such a view, how contemptible the course of those Northern presses that have charged our martyred brother with "stealing slaves." Did Torrey withdraw slaves from their masters in order to appropriate them to his own use? On the contrary, did he not restore stolen property to its rightful owners? To whom do the faculties of the slave belong, but to himself, and if he has been robbed of his own soul and body, is it stealing to restore them to him? Verily, according to such ethics, if the good Samaritan had overtaken one of the thieves who plundered the traveler and had wrested from him the traveler's property, he might have been arrested at Jericho for stealing, and sentenced to six years' imprisonment! Men who use such language do not believe their own assertions, and I shall waste no more words in refuting their arguments. I

repeat it, the most atrocious feature in the whole transaction is, that our brother should have been murdered for no crime, but rather for his virtue.

3. The outrage takes a darker hue, when we remember the age of the world in which it has occurred. The appalling crime perpetrated at Gibeah, occurred in an age of darkness, when men had but little light on the subject of morals, but the cruel punishment inflicted on Charles T. Torrey for a deed of mercy, has been executed in the nineteenth century, amid all the boasted and real light of the age. Had such an enormity come down on the page of history as having been committed in the dark ages, by order of the Inquisition, it would, indeed, have excited horror in the reader, but it would have been in some measure expected and to a degree excused. But what shall be said of Torrey's death in this age of intelligence, of liberty of benevolent operation? What excuse shall we offer for a deed that would have disgraced the reign of Nero, or Caligula? In the indignant language of Henry Clapp, Jr., we may exclaim—

“The Nineteenth Century hath tales to tell  
Even in this his six and fortieth year,  
Which well might wring from Satan's self a tear,  
To hiss among the burning depths of Hell.”

4. Remember also the land in which the deed was committed. It was not done in New Zealand—it was not done in Algiers—it was not done in the South Sea Islands, but it was done in the United States of America—the land of Hancock, of Adams, of Patrick Henry, of Washington! It was done in a land of boasted liberty and equality, whose first and greatest statepaper declares that “all men are created equal” and have an “inalienable” right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” In this, which professes to be the freest country on earth, which eulogizes the heroes of the revolution because they preferred death to slavery, was a minister of Jesus Christ murdered for peaceably aiding the bondman in his flight from oppression! Such a crime, had it occurred under the despotism of the Russian autocrat, would have been worthy of the deepest execration—what then must be its turpitude when perpetrated on this soil sacred to freedom! Can it be possible, that such an event has taken place, where religion also is supposed to exert its greatest power, where revivals have prevailed, where the Bible and the Sabbath are recognized, where Jehovah is worshipped, where the claims of the merciful Saviour are admitted? Could it be done, with nearly twenty thousand professed ministers of Christ preaching the gospel

which proclaims liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison-doors to them who are bound? With the presses of the American Bible Society publishing a thousand copies of the Word of God, every day? With tracts flying on every wind, and missionaries sailing in almost every ship? If so, then there must be a great deal of mockery in our freedom, a great deal of hypocrisy in our religion.

5. The crowning attribute of wickedness which is connected with the murder of Torrey, is the fact that it was committed under the forms of law. It was in no outburst of popular fury that Torrey lost his life, and in this respect his death is more properly entitled martyrdom, than was that of the lamented Lovejoy, who fell a victim to a blood-thirsty mob. No, Maryland has not even the poor excuse behind which degraded Alton sought to hide. There was nothing hasty, nothing which could be charged to sudden phrenzy, in the act of outrage which calls us together this evening. Every thing was deliberate, every thing was by the official act of the constituted authorities of the State. This feature, which, in the opinion of some, actually sanctifies the iniquity, is, to my mind, only an aggravation. Where a people have become so hardened in sin as actually to enact crime by legal statute, it proves that their consciences are seared as with a hot iron, that Jehovah has been completely dethroned and the Prince of Darkness invested with the supreme authority. This is the view, not of heated imagination, but of the Bible. Hence the Psalmist asks, "Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law?" In like manner the prophet Isaiah said—"Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed—to turn aside the needy from justice and to take away the right from the poor of my people." There is no comparing the power for evil of an outrage committed against law, and one committed by law. The latter, as it proceeds from an atheistic state of mind, so it also tends in a peculiar degree to beget the same in others—the majesty of law hiding the atrocity of crime! Thus judged, the State of Maryland sinks in infamy beneath the very inhabitants of Gibeah, for the enormity perpetrated there, was not by legal appointment, but by a lawless outbreak of "certain sons of Belial," and the narrative concludes by the palliating announcement—"In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes." I come now—

III. *To consider the effect which such an atrocious act should have upon the friends of humanity in this country.* When the tidings went forth of an outrage at Gibeah, every one that heard them was filled

with indignation, and the children of Israel "gathered together as one man." Before them the injured Levite appeared and declared his wrongs. Thereupon, it was determined that no man should return to his home until justice was done. The criminals were demanded, and when the tribe of Benjamin refused to deliver them, the other tribes drew the sword, and it was not sheathed till only 600 men remained of nearly 30,000 who constituted the guilty tribe. In contrast with this commendable readiness of Israel to do justice to one obscure man, notice the heartless conduct of this nation. The tidings of Torrey's death have gone forth on the four winds, have been published in nearly every paper in the land, and yet with a few exceptions there has been no manifestation of horror, or of a determination to revenge his death. The friends of the slave, have, indeed, honored his memory and strengthened their resolution to tear down the Bastille of slavery—but among the great mass of the people, there has been less emotion than would have been excited by the wreck of a ship and the loss of a few bales of goods. The ministry have shown a strange neglect of their brother during his cruel imprisonment, but here and there have there been any expressions of sympathy. God grant that they may find more mercy than they have shewn, in the hour of their last agony and the day of their solemn trial. But, my hearers, some salutary impression should be made by this mournful event. What shall it be?

1. Let us endeavor to realize the infamy with which our whole land has been covered. The deed was done in Maryland, but the shame will appertain to the country at large. Foreigners look upon us as one government—they know that nothing less than the power of all the States could keep three millions of people in bondage—they know we have delivered up the fugitive in all the free States—they know that we are pledged to put down slave insurrection—that we have in Church and State struck hands with the oppressor and trodden on the slave. When they hear of the cruel fate of Torrey, they will laugh our pretensions to scorn and point the finger of derision at our inconsistencies. Our country is disgraced before the world, and we have reason to blush that we are citizens of the United States. The tyrants of the old world will exult at the tidings and exclaim Aha, Aha, we would have it so! The public prints will give the details of our villainy and exclaim, "There is the *model republic*, which calls on all nations to imitate its example, which amid its frothy declamation concerning liberty and equality, enslaves three millions of its inhabitants, and murders those who break their bonds."

"Just God! and shall we calmly rest,  
The Christian's scorn—the Heathen's mirth,  
Content to live the lingering jest,  
And by-word of a mocking earth?"

2. Let us remember our exposure to the wrath of a holy God. Methinks I hear the awful voice of Jehovah exclaiming as of old— "Shall I not visit for these things, shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Ages since, God laid desolate the land of his peculiar people on account of the sins of Manasseh, and there was this fearful specification in the catalogue of crime, "the innocent blood that he shed, which the Lord would not pardon." No man can tell the innocent blood that has been shed in this land, if we include the poor slave in our view, and now the blood of Torrey cries from the ground. Can we expect that God will much longer forbear—that the red lightnings of his wrath will long be stayed in their descent upon our guilty nation? Brethren in Christ, if you love your country, pray for it, pray for it, that God will yet give us a space for repentance.

3. Let there be a realization of personal guilt in Torrey's death. We may not have actively consented to the crime, but we have not as a community done what we could for the overthrow of the system in whose defence Torrey has been sacrificed. Had the North for the last twenty-five years poured forth a united voice of condemnation, slavery would have perished and Torrey would now be alive. But the South has hitherto found the North a willing partner in iniquity. In no part of our country have more numerous and skillfully drawn defences of slavery been preached and published than in New England. The gospel has been tortured into a sanction for the system, and the golden rule itself been interpreted in favor of oppression. Our Colleges, Theological Seminaries and Benevolent Societies, have conspired to lull the conscience of the slaveholder to rest, and the result is, that slavery has grown stronger and bolder, till by our cowardice and unfaithfulness, it has taken the life of our brother. This event furnishes occasion of shame and deep humiliation to thousands of Northern Christians. May God convince them of their sin and lead them to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

4. Lastly, the death of Torrey should beget in us a deadly hostility to slaveholding in all its forms, and a firm determination to labor for its speedy overthrow. When William Morgan was murdered by the Freemasons, the whole land was aroused and so strong was the expression of indignation that Masonry withered and well nigh died under the public frown. Shall the death of Torrey have less effect?



Shall our murdered brother go unavenged? Does not his blood cry to us from the ground, and bid us overthrow American Slavery? Think not that this crime was a mere incident of the system. It was necessary to sustain it. Let it once be understood that the friends of the slave may without hindrance, aid the escape of fugitives and the days of slavery are numbered. It was in defence of slavery that Torrey was immolated, and unless we are prepared to lay many such victims on the altar, we must abolish the whole system. He who denounces the murder of Torrey, while he maintains the righteousness of slaveholding, honors his own compassion at the expense of his intellect. Go hence, my hearers, with the solemn vow that slavery shall die. Exert your utmost power in Church and State to hasten emancipation. Labor, speak, write, sing, pray and vote for the slave. Elevate no more slaveholders to office, entrust no more political power to men who will truckle to slaveholders, but learn what you must know by bitter experience, that slavery is incomparably the greatest political evil in the land. Purge the churches also from all connection with this sin—allow no slaveholder to approach your communion table—let the churches treat the subject with that solemnity which its importance demands, until it shall at least be considered as disciplinable an offence to chattelize God's image, as it is to engage in a dance or to marry a deceased wife's sister.

The day will come when the slave shall be free—then will Torrey be fully vindicated, and his memory shall be blessed. Of him we may say as did Whittier of the Rev. Charles B. Storrs, former President of Western Reserve College:—

“Thou hast fallen in thine armor  
Thou martyr of the Lord!  
With thy last breath crying—‘Onward,’  
And thy hand upon the sword.  
The haughty heart derideth,  
And the sinful lip reviles,  
But the blessing of the perishing  
Around thy pillow smiles!

Oppression's hand may scatter  
Its needles on thy tomb,  
And even Christian bosoms  
Deny thy memory room;  
For lying lips shall torture  
Thy mercy into crime.  
And the slanderer shall flourish  
Like the bay tree for a time.

But, where the south-wind lingers  
     On Carolina's pines,  
 Or, falls the careless sunbeam  
     Down Georgia's golden mines,—  
 Where now beneath his burthen  
     The toiling slave is driven,—  
 Where now a tyrant's mockery  
     Is offered unto Heaven—

Where Mammon hath its altars  
     Wet o'er with human blood,  
 And Pride and Lust debases  
     The workmanship of God—  
 There shall thy praise be spoken,  
     Redeemed from falsehood's ban,  
 When the fetters shall be broken,  
     And the *slave* shall be a *man* ! "